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I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session 2008 of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 21 to 28 January 2008.

2. The Executive Board elected the following members of the Bureau for 2008:

President	H.E. Mr.Jean-Marie Ehouzou (Benin)
Vice-President	Mr. Mahmudul Karim (Bangladesh)
Vice-President	Mr. Gustavo Endara (Ecuador)
Vice-President	H.E. Mr. Peter Burian (Slovakia)
Vice-President	Mr. Thomas Gass (Switzerland)

3. The Executive Board adopted the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 2008 (DP/2008/L.1), and adopted the report of the second regular session 2007 (DP/2008/1 and its corrigendum, DP/2008/1/Corr.1). The Executive Board adopted the annual work plan for 2008 (DP/2008/CRP.1) and approved the tentative work plan for the annual session 2008.

4. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule for the remaining sessions of the Executive Board in 2008:

Annual session 2008:	16 to 27 June 2008 (Geneva)
Second regular session 2008:	8 to 12 September 2008

5. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2007 were included in document DP/2008/2, accessible at www.undp.org/execbrd.

Administrator's statement

6. The Administrator noted that the current negative forecast for advanced economies was expected to be offset by growth in some large developing countries. He cited advances in poverty reduction in the least developed countries, notably in sub-Saharan African economies. Surveying worldwide progress on the Millennium Development Goals, he praised strategies emerging in disadvantaged regions that were succeeding through a combination of strong government commitment, human development supportive policies and investment frameworks, buttressed by adequate international support. He acknowledged that replicating such progress would be a priority for UNDP, as set out in its updated strategic plan, 2008-2011.

7. He emphasized that, in 2008, UNDP would continue to provide policy and technical support across its focus areas, while promoting and supporting gender equality and women's empowerment, by helping to strengthen human and institutional capacity for the successful design and execution of country-owned national development strategies and programmes. Less duplication and greater efficiency and effectiveness were essential for the United Nations and UNDP to function optimally, he asserted, citing ongoing efforts to 'deliver as one'. He underscored that joint programming at country level needed to be tailored to specific national circumstances in partnership with governments. He reaffirmed that United Nations and UNDP operations would be guided by the prescriptions of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which recognized the central role of resident coordinators in ensuring alignment and accountability of United Nations system activities to national authorities and development strategies.

8. Turning to UNDP programming priorities, he noted that:

(a) *Crisis, internal conflict and state failure are the most important obstacles to human development progress*, and UNDP is leading the United Nations system in early recovery interventions, including finding creative, adaptable ways of mobilizing resources;

(b) *Sustainable development and climate change are inextricably linked*, and UNDP must urgently follow up the successful advocacy of the Human Development Report 2007 and the Bali Conference on Climate Change to ensure that resources are scaled up and the private sector engaged to address adaptation, mitigation and clean-energy strategies; and

(c) *Developing institutional capacity at all levels is at the heart of UNDP interventions*, and UNDP needs to remain creative and attuned to local conditions in responding to national plans, prioritizing South-South cooperation wherever possible.

9. The Administrator invoked the 11 December 2007 terrorist attack on the United Nations in Algiers as evidence of a heightened security risk for United Nations personnel, and reaffirmed the determination of the administration to mitigate this risk. Accordingly, he called on host governments and Member States to strengthen security as a matter of priority, and on all country offices to ensure compliance with the minimum operating security standards.

10. He announced that an updated version of the strategic plan, 2008-2011, had been posted on the Executive Board website, following extensive consultations in connection with the provisions of decision 2007/32. He confirmed that the Board would review the elements of the strategic plan at its annual session 2008.

11. Delegations reaffirmed the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, many acknowledging the urgency of responding to climate change, empowering women and strengthening South-South cooperation. They stressed the importance of securing adequate, timely and predictable funding to support least developed countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Some urged UNDP to focus particularly on sub-Saharan Africa. Delegations reiterated to UNDP the importance of fulfilling its core mandate and leveraging its strengths while continuing to develop strategic partnerships with governments, other United Nations bodies and multilateral organizations. They praised the accountability framework and oversight policy, as well as the results-based format of the biennial support budget, as efforts to enhance transparency and better measure results. Several anticipated valuable lessons from the report on the pilot offices. Some urged UNDP to fulfil its commitment to making more information available online, noting unevenness in the availability of country programme results and assistance data.

12. Delegations conveyed their condolences for the victims of the Algiers attack, and endorsed the Administrator's call for strengthening security measures.

13. Several delegations expressed regret that the period following the posting of the updated strategic plan had allowed little time for subsequent review and informal consultation. They pointed out that the decision on the strategic plan taken at the second regular session 2007 did not preclude such consultation, which they felt would have guided deliberations on the strategic plan as it related to the biennial support budget. They asked that recommendations contained in the reports on the

evaluation of results-based management and of South-South cooperation be reflected in the revised strategic plan, 2008-2011, to be presented at the annual session 2008 of the Executive Board.

14. Delegations reaffirmed the central role of UNDP in coordinating United Nations activities at the country level, stressing the importance of maintaining impartiality and enforcing the highest ethical standards in managing the resident coordinator system. One delegation registered strong approval of the commitment to train resident coordinators in matters of trade. This delegation emphasized that the United Nations had an important role to play in reducing barriers to trade and in developing the private sector worldwide, and called for closer collaboration among United Nations organizations in that regard. Another delegation urged UNDP to ensure that the costs of the resident coordinator system not divert resources away from programme assistance.

15. Regarding efforts to improve accountability and oversight, several delegations maintained that UNDP effectiveness should be measured on the basis of its impact on progress toward internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Some pointed out that improvements to transparency and accountability stood to benefit all Member States by providing evidence of development results. They recommended clearer distinctions between internal monitoring indicators and those designed to measure broader strategic impact.

16. A number of delegations identified climate change as a major development challenge that should figure prominently in the 'delivering as one' agenda. Some hailed the 2007 Human Development Report as timely and insightful, and urged UNDP to continue to develop programmes to assist developing countries in their adaptation efforts.

17. Some delegations expressed concern over the decline in official development assistance and the proportion of core resources, and called on donors to observe aid targets. Some delegations used the opportunity to announce substantial increases in pledged support.

18. Delegations reaffirmed the four thematic focus areas for UNDP. Some singled out crisis prevention and recovery as a priority within their own governments, while others reiterated the importance of addressing cross-cutting issues such as women's empowerment and South-South cooperation in all areas of programming.

UNDP segment

II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

19. The Administrator presented the biennial support budget, 2008-2009, in the new results-based format, and indicated that total resource contributions for the period were estimated to be $10.1 billion. He underscored that estimates in the biennial support budget built on the 2004 and 2007 triennial comprehensive policy reviews. In that regard, he proposed a net biennial support budget, 2008-2009, funded from regular resources of $779 million. The Administrator described the rationale for the number of proposed new senior-level posts and upward reclassifications of existing posts. He addressed the overall security situation and proposed a global UNDP

earmarking for meeting security requirements of approximately $87 million for the 2008-2009 biennium.

20. Delegations welcomed the results-based presentation of the biennial support budget, 2008-2009. In so doing, they encouraged greater harmonization of methodology and results with partner organizations. They expressed the view that support budget funding should increasingly be covered from other resources, in line with the need to achieve more equitable burden-sharing between regular and other resources. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with overall improved UNDP funding levels, with respect to regular and other resources as well as to cost recovery allocations.

21. Delegations urged UNDP to develop objectively verifiable indicators with stronger linkages to the strategic plan, 2008-2011. Some called for better harmonization of management functions and cost classifications, and for more precision in the scope and depth of anticipated results.

22. Delegations encouraged UNDP to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), especially with respect to improving transparency, containing costs, increasing efficiency, strengthening linkages to programmatic activities in line with national development priorities, and the overall rationale for the number of post reclassifications proposed to the D-2 and D-1 levels. Some delegations called for a more comprehensive presentation in the budget document, providing further details on major objects of expenditure and sources of funding. One delegation asked management to provide a schedule for implementing the recommendations.

23. Many delegations stressed the importance of keeping the support budget low in proportion to programming resources by limiting post upgrades and reducing travel expenses through the optimal use of technology. They recommended that UNDP find innovative ways to meet country demands while minimizing recurring costs. In that regard, several delegations proposed more efficient recruitment and training of national staff, one delegation noting with concern a decline in the number of local staff since 2004, and in the ratio of national to international staff.

24. Some delegations proposed reviewing the approval cycle of the biennial support budget, working with partner organizations to increase efficiency.

25. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/1 covering the UNDP biennial support budget, 2008-2009; additional United Nations-mandated security measures for UNDP personnel and premises; and the introduction of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. The Board approved regular resources of $853.6 million (gross) for the 2008-2009 biennial support budget, $51.2 million to cover security measures mandated by the United Nations, and $9 million to cover the cost of introducing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. The Board took note of the ACABQ finding with respect to the need for stronger links to proposed programmes, and their concern regarding upward post reclassifications. The Board requested UNDP to provide, in future support budgets, a breakdown by cost category for major expenditures showing efficiencies gained against specific targets, and to exercise restraint in implementing its proposed upward reclassifications. The Board also requested UNDP to address the issues of increased efficiency; the harmonization of cost classifications; improved burden-sharing between regular and other resources; and the continued harmonization and enhancement of results-based budgeting.

26. The Executive Director, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), presented the UNIFEM biennial support budget and the management response to the ACABQ report. The proposed budget called for a $7 million increase and nine new posts, with nearly half the attendant costs for the latter dedicated to supporting strategic plan objectives in the field. The Executive Director projected a decrease of over 3 per cent in the share of the support budget to the total use of resources. She noted a continued upward trend in income, noting that core resource contribution pledges for 2008 were already surpassing projections.

27. Delegations expressed appreciation for the increased support of women's empowerment and gender equality as central pillars of development. Some delegations took the floor to pledge substantial increases in support to UNIFEM.

28. Delegations proposed that UNIFEM, together with UNDP and other partner United Nations organizations, review the approval cycle for the biennial support budget to increase efficiency.

29. One delegation asked about contingency measures should UNIFEM fail to meet funding projections – specifically, whether programmes would be cut, and if so, which ones. In response, the Executive Director assured delegations that if projections could not be met, the support budget would be reduced before the programme budget, in a phased approach.

30. The Executive Board approved gross appropriations of $23,044,000 and called on countries in a position to do so to increase regular contributions to UNIFEM. The Board requested UNIFEM to provide in future support budgets a breakdown by cost category for major expenditures showing efficiencies achieved against specific targets. The Board urged UNIFEM to continue efforts to harmonize and improve efficiency with a view to reducing the proportion of support resources and increasing that of programming resources.

31. The Board adopted decision 2008/2 on the UNIFEM biennial support budget, 2008-2009, and the UNIFEM resources mobilization framework.

III. Country programmes and related matters

32. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, presented, and the Executive Board approved, regional programmes for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the following two multi-country programmes and 14 country programmes:

Africa: Regional programme, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo;

Arab States: Kuwait and Somalia;

Asia and the Pacific: Regional programme, multi-country programmes for Fiji and Samoa, and Nepal; and

Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional programme, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua.

33. Several delegations took the floor to thank UNDP for its support and to praise the consultative process employed in preparing the regional and country programme documents.

IV. Evaluation

34. The Director of the Evaluation Office presented a report on the evaluation of results-based management in UNDP. While observing similarities with the experiences of other early adapters of results-based management, the evaluation found: (a) that RBM had a limited impact on country portfolios; (b) a need for clearer substantive oversight role from the regional bureaux; (c) insufficient means of developing a results-oriented culture; and (d) corporate misalignment with country-level operations. The report recommended a stronger management commitment to a culture of results; a clearer delineation of corporate goals and programme outcomes; improved country office capacity to 'manage for outcomes'; and an expanded use of audits and evaluations.

35. The Associate Administrator, presenting the management response to the evaluations (DP/2008/7), described ongoing efforts to respond to challenges identified in the evaluations. He noted a proposed increase in evaluation resources, and expressed the commitment of management to forging a results-based institutional culture.

36. Delegations welcomed the evaluation report on results-based management as timely, indicating that the findings were consistent with their own observations that the reporting of results during the period of the last strategic plan, 2004-2007, was weak, and that country programme performance data had not been made available since the Board requested it in early 2006. While acknowledging the complexity and limitations of the results-based approach, several delegations recognized its value in measuring effectiveness. They emphasized that performance assessment and reporting systems could be simplified without compromising data quality. Delegations took note of the instruments used to measure results, such as the 'balanced scorecard' and the results and competency assessment. They also encouraged UNDP to build flexibility into corporate standards so as to remain adaptable at the country level.

37. Delegations urged senior management to move beyond directives and communicate in broader, more effective ways to instil a results-oriented culture throughout UNDP. They encouraged UNDP to continue adapting incentive structures to results-based approaches, noting that skills and mindsets also needed reorienting toward results. Many urged senior management to ensure consistent messaging across the range of initiatives, and to establish clear lines of oversight. Some delegations asserted that performance assessment was more important than reporting in developing a results-oriented culture.

38. Delegations posed a number of questions regarding the findings of the evaluation report and the UNDP management response, and requested that UNDP management and the Evaluation Office provide their responses on the Executive Board web page. Delegations stated that discussions on this important issue should continue.

39. Some delegations urged UNDP to align results-based management initiatives more closely with national strategies, and to help strengthen the capacity of countries to use and interpret indicators. Many called for follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations, underscoring that UNDP bears equal reporting responsibility to recipient countries as to donors. Some advised UNDP to maintain a long-term perspective on results that might prove difficult to track over brief intervals. They reiterated that the results-based approach should not be an end

in itself, but rather a means of ensuring the achievement of national development objectives. Others perceived a correlation between the gradual adoption of the approach over the years and the 'upstreaming' of development services, resulting in less tangible evidence of results and lower visibility at the grass-roots level.

40. The Director of the Evaluation Office presented a report on the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation. The evaluation called for strengthening the resources and mandate of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation; developing a robust approach at the corporate level; providing more effective institutional guidance; and strengthening system-wide collaboration on South-South initiatives.

41. The Director of the Bureau for Development Policy acknowledged the findings and provided examples of UNDP initiatives to strengthen South-South cooperation.

42. Delegations endorsed the conclusions of the report and affirmed the centrality of South-South cooperation to the development agenda. They urged UNDP to reflect this centrality in its programming, and to increase support to South-South cooperation activities among programme countries. They called upon UNDP to cultivate a robust approach to South-South cooperation in the fourth cooperation framework for South-South cooperation, as a complement to North-South cooperation for development. They called on donors to increase resources for that purpose.

43. Recommending specific improvements to the fourth cooperation framework for South-South cooperation, delegations requested a clearer delineation of the roles of developing and middle-income countries, and called for stronger cooperation on issues such as HIV and AIDS.

44. Many urged UNDP to strengthen the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to optimize its system-wide coordination role. Citing examples of bilateral and regional cooperation among developing countries, many called upon UNDP to better monitor, capture and disseminate successful South-South initiatives and lessons. Some asserted that a more systematic approach was needed, with clearer indicators and outcomes; several extolled the merits of 'triangulation' (using three sources of data to verify and substantiate an assessment).

45. The Executive Board took note of the report on the evaluation of results-based management in UNDP (DP/2008/6) and the management response thereto (DP/2008/7). The Board also took note of the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation (DP/2008/8) and the corresponding management response (DP/2008/9).

V. South-South cooperation

46. The Director of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation assured delegates that the fourth cooperation framework for South-South cooperation would take account of the recent evaluation, the recommendations of the triennial comprehensive policy review and the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, and that the unit would remain responsive to the demands of countries. He emphasized that the immediate priorities for the unit would include: (a) supporting national governments, country offices and partner organizations in focusing on

Southern solutions to inclusive development; (b) improving knowledge-sharing; and (c) adopting a 'transactional' approach to cooperation.

47. Delegations recommended that South-South cooperation be prioritized in the strategic plan and mainstreamed at the policy level, to reflect the importance of its role as a catalyst for development.

48. Several delegations commended the sharpened analytical approach promised for the fourth cooperation framework, with its focus on knowledge transfer and policy support. Some reiterated the call to strengthen the mandate of the unit and to increase its flexibility to mobilize resources.

49. The Executive Board approved the extension of the third cooperation framework for South-South cooperation (DP/2008/10).

VI. Programming arrangements

50. The Associate Administrator presented information on the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC)-2 distribution methodology and the criteria for establishing fixed lines in the programming arrangements, noting that the flexibility built into the TRAC-2 facility that allowed the Administrator to allocate resources to high-impact activities and to reward programme quality.

51. Delegations requested more information on the management and evaluation of programmes funded under TRAC-1 and TRAC-2, as well as the support budget. Some delegations cautioned that the shift toward performance-based standards in TRAC-2 might demotivate staff from performing complex interventions in favour of simpler projects with easily attainable results. Delegations urged UNDP to ensure that programme countries remained involved in establishing criteria for TRAC allocations, and that allocations adequately addressed all countries. One delegation underscored the distinction between equality of opportunity and equality of results, encouraging UNDP to reward the most effective results. UNDP acknowledged the need for balance between responding effectively to development challenges and rewarding strong performance.

52. The Executive Board took note of the report on the TRAC-2 distribution methodology and fixed-line allocations (DP/2008/14).

VII. Gender in UNDP

53. The Director, Gender Team, Bureau for Development Policy, presented an oral report on the 2007 gender action plan and the gender equality strategy, 2008-2011. She noted that UNDP had enhanced its role as a knowledge broker in the field, while acknowledging ongoing challenges in developing capacity, increasing accountability, monitoring progress and building partnerships.

54. Delegations expressed support for the action plan and commended UNDP on the progress made with respect to women's empowerment. They supported the gender equality strategy and encouraged UNDP to implement relevant elements of the triennial comprehensive policy review. Delegations encouraged UNDP to further mainstream gender, and to use gender-disaggregated data to measure results. They called for adequate resources, and for accountability at all levels.

VIII. United Nations Development Fund for Women

55. The Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), presented the UNIFEM resource mobilization framework, 2008-2011, as well as the cost recovery policy, and outlined the proposed goals for the period.

56. Delegations expressed strong support for the UNIFEM mandate and reiterated the importance of mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment across all development interventions. They commended UNIFEM for the positive appraisal by the ACABQ of its biennial support budget. They praised the clear objectives and priorities set out in the resource mobilization framework, which they felt aligned well with the UNIFEM strategic plan, 2008-2011. They welcomed the proposed diversification of funding sources and declared the proposal "realistically ambitious", given the upward trend in funding.

57. Delegations encouraged UNIFEM to "deepen, diversify and expand" in order to respond to the increasing demand for its services. Several described successful collaborations between UNIFEM and their governments, and pledged increased resources and support.

58. Many delegations called upon Member States to increase funding, and upon UNIFEM to emphasize core contributions and explore thematic funding arrangements. They urged UNIFEM to strengthen communications and to engage in more strategic partnerships with other United Nations organizations. Several delegations expressed support for the senior management view that UNIFEM should participate in all United Nations forums that affected its work.

59. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/3 on the UNIFEM cost-recovery policy.

IX. United Nations Capital Development Fund

60. The Executive Secretary, a.i., United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), presented the UNDP-UNCDF partnership framework, as well as the UNCDF programming and funding arrangements and cost-recovery policy. She highlighted initiatives in post-crisis countries as well as an increase in national programme execution, citing examples of projects that had been successfully scaled up and replicated. She described plans to expand services from 39 to 45 countries by 2011.

61. Delegations praised the focus on the least developed countries, some expressing a desire to see UNCDF extend its coverage even further than projected. Some encouraged UNCDF to seek additional resources to support relevant populations within middle-income countries. Others applauded the broadening of the donor base to include many Southern donors, and cited the funding increase as evidence of support for the mandate and management of UNCDF.

62. Delegations commended the successful collaborations between UNCDF and other United Nations organizations and the clear linkages established between governance and access to capital. They noted with approval that the proposed expansion of services would require only a small increase in staff.

63. One delegation queried the percentage of UNCDF programmes not executed in collaboration with other organizations. Senior management responded that more

than 95 per cent of UNCDF programmes were executed jointly with other organizations, to make full use of the comparative advantages of each. Another delegation, noting that the cost recovery policy included a waiver, requested further details on its purposes and restrictions. Management acknowledged that the cost recovery policy would need to be better harmonized with that of UNDP, but assured delegations that while the waiver had been built in for possible use in joint programming, thus far no need had arisen, nor was any anticipated. A third delegation, requesting an explanation for the projected decrease in allocations after 2010, was advised that the decrease contemplated the 'graduation' of some programme countries from low- to middle-income status.

64. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/4 on the UNCDF partnership framework with UNDP, the programming and funding arrangements, and the cost-recovery policy.

X. United Nations Office for Project Services

65. The Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), presented the biennial planning and budget framework in results-based format. In presenting the $120 million budget – an increase, owing to the combination of a weak United States dollar, inflation and salary increases – he pointed out that the present budget would cover certain functions previously performed by the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office.

66. Delegations commended the efforts of senior management to improve effectiveness and financial transparency, noting the progress outlined in the recent report of the ACABQ. They encouraged UNOPS to follow the ACABQ recommendation that it provide more information on cost-saving measures and include information on major budget expenditures. They urged UNOPS to reconcile interfund balances with those of other funds and programmes and to resolve cost overruns. Some praised the effort to harmonize the budget format. The Executive Director reaffirmed financial transparency as a priority and announced that the first UNOPS annual report in many years would be presented at the annual session 2008.

67. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/5 on the UNOPS biennial planning and budget framework.

Joint UNDP/UNFPA segment

XI. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

UNDP

68. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, 2004-2005, noting that 95 per cent of the recommendations had been implemented. He confirmed that action on the remaining recommendations would be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2008. He described improvements in the timeliness and impact of audits of nationally executed projects. He mentioned Afghanistan, where the financial impact of such audits amounted to $0.47 million as compared with $17.9 million in 2005. Noting that national execution was strengthened by

standards of mutual accountability for programme governments and UNDP, he described measures to strengthen internal controls in Atlas.

69. UNDP senior managers stated that only one country office had yet to complete its bank reconciliations.

UNFPA

70. The Deputy Executive Director (External relations, United Nations affairs and management), UNFPA, introduced the Fund's report entitled Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2004-2005: Status of implementation of recommendations (DP/FPA/2008/3). She noted that to supplement the report a table with detailed information on each recommendation had been posted on the UNFPA web site.

71. The Executive Board took note of the reports of UNDP (DP/2008/15) and UNFPA (DP/FPA/2008/3).

XII. Internal audit and oversight

UNDP

72. The Associate Administrator presented a report on the UNDP accountability system, including the accountability framework and the oversight policy and confirmed that UNDP would be responsive to the recommendations of institutional oversight bodies.

73. Delegations appreciated efforts to strengthen accountability and oversight, and encouraged continued engagement with Member States in following the recommendations of the triennial comprehensive policy review and the Executive Board. Many called for a clear definition of accountability and related concepts, the conditions under which internal audit reports would be disclosed and the information that would be subject to disclosure. Some delegations underscored the need to align accountability and oversight systems with country programmes, asserting that improvements in transparency were a tool to achieve development effectiveness at the country level.

74. Delegations urged the funds and programmes to pursue a harmonized approach to audit disclosure and accountability in their increasingly decentralized operations. Some delegations said that disclosure should be permitted under limited circumstances, with the prior consent of the Executive Board and the countries involved, and should include a mechanism to hold the recipient of such information accountable for its use. They requested clarification concerning the role of programme countries in the disclosure process, and urged UNDP to safeguard against the misuse of information and the politicization of development work. Others encouraged UNDP to find ways of minimizing reporting requirements without sacrificing stakeholder confidence, and of ensuring effective operational controls.

UNFPA

75. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (External relations, United Nations affairs and management) introduced the UNFPA oversight policy (DP/FPA/2008/4) developed in response to decision 2007/29. The Associate Administrator, UNDP,

presented the UNDP accountability system, including the accountability framework and oversight policy.

76. Delegations appreciated UNFPA and UNDP efforts to strengthen accountability and oversight, and encouraged continued engagement with Member States in following the recommendations of the TCPR and the Executive Board. At the same time, many delegations called for clearer definitions of accountability and related concepts, as well as of the conditions under which internal audit reports would be disclosed and the kinds of information that would be subject to disclosure. Some delegations underscored the need to align accountability and oversight systems with country programmes. They urged the funds and programmes to pursue a harmonized approach to audit disclosure inspired by the UNFPA proposal. Some delegations expressed the view that disclosure should be permitted under limited circumstances, with prior consent of the Board and of the countries involved, and with a means of holding the requester of the information accountable for its use. They requested clarification concerning the role of programme countries in the disclosure process, and exhorted UNDP to safeguard against the possible abuse of information disclosed and against the politicization of development work. Others urged UNDP to find ways to minimize reporting requirements without sacrificing stakeholder confidence and to ensure effective operational controls throughout a decentralized system.

77. The Deputy Executive Director (External relations, United Nations affairs and management) UNFPA, thanked the delegations for their useful and constructive feedback and assured them that UNFPA would fully engage in a consultative process, as in the past, and as called for by the Executive Board. She concurred with Board members that given the complexity of the issues additional time was needed for consultation. She assured the Board that there were regular consultations amongst the United Nations funds and programmes. The Director, Division for Oversight Services, UNFPA, stated that UNFPA had engaged in a consultative process in developing its oversight policy. He noted that UNFPA had circulated the draft document to the Representatives of Internal Audit Services (RIAS) and obtained their advice. Regarding the Audit Advisory Committee, he observed that it was a standard and most public institutions had such audit committees. Regarding the single audit principle, he underscored that the United Nations system agreed on this principle and the United Nations Board of Auditors was solely responsible for the conduct of external audits. Concerning the disclosure of internal audits, he noted that while there were a variety of situations the common denominator amongst the system-wide organizations was that whenever there was a policy of disclosure it would be submitted to the respective governing body for approval.

78. The Executive Board adopted an oral decision requesting UNDP and UNFPA to revert to the Board at its second regular session 2008, after extensive consultations with the Board to review the pertinent UNDP and UNFPA documentation, taking into account the concerns of Member States.

XIII. Report to the Economic and Social Council

79. On behalf of UNDP and UNFPA, the Director, Partnerships Bureau, UNDP, introduced the joint report of the UNDP Administrator and the UNFPA Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council. He described the ways in which the directives of the triennial comprehensive policy review were translated into action. He responded favourably to the suggestion of one delegation that the cost of United Nations coordination be evaluated and the results shared.

80. The Director, Strategic Planning Office, UNFPA, noted that the cost of coordination had been discussed in the Fund's budget document. Furthermore, the evaluations of the 'delivering as one' pilots would yield information regarding coordination costs.

81. The Board adopted decision 2008/7 (a) on the joint report of UNDP and UNFPA to the Economic and Social Council and (b) on the recommendation regarding the appointment of the Executive Director of UNFPA.

UNFPA segment

XIV. Statement by the Executive Director and financial, budgetary and administrative matters

82. The UNFPA segment commenced with the statement by the Executive Director. She thanked the outgoing President and the Bureau members for their leadership and support and guidance to UNFPA. She congratulated the new President and the Bureau of the Executive Board. She paid tribute to Ms. Fama Ba, former Director of the Africa Division, UNFPA, who had retired in December 2007. The Executive Director focused on highlights of UNFPA in 2007 and the outlook for 2008. In the course of her statement she also introduced the proposed biennial support budget (BSB), 2008-2009. She paid tribute to UNFPA staff, many of whom worked in difficult and dangerous places. She referred to the recent tragedy in Algiers that took the lives of several United Nations staff, including three UNFPA staff members. She extended her sympathy to their families. She thanked the Member States for the condolences expressed on the passing away of her own mother on 8 January 2008. She stressed the importance of balancing private and public lives and humanizing the workplace.

83. The Executive Director noted that in 2007 UNFPA registered a record of 181 countries providing voluntary contributions to UNFPA (more countries than for any other United Nations organization), with regular resources rising to a record high of $418 million in 2007 and co-financing resources hitting a record high of $220 million in 2007. She thanked all Governments for their contributions and conveyed special thanks to the top ten donors of UNFPA: the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, Japan, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Spain and Canada. She also thanked the United Kingdom Government for the contribution of 100 million pounds over five years to the UNFPA Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security. She noted UNFPA achievements in 2007 in the areas of gender equality and reproductive rights; investment in adolescent girls; prevention of gender-based violence; response to humanitarian crises in 50 countries in 2007; technical assistance for censuses provided in more than 60 countries; the 2007 State of World Population Report; and UNFPA leadership in the 2007 Women Deliver Conference held in London.

84. The Executive Director stated that 2008 would be a milestone for UNFPA with the implementation of the strategic plan and with the Fund's reorganization to make UNFPA a more field-focused organization. She elaborated on various aspects of the Fund's reorganization. She noted that UNFPA would follow up on the Bali Conference on Climate Change. She emphasized the need to improve maternal health and drew attention to the recently established maternal health trust fund. She underscored the need to scale up reproductive health commodity security and called for increased efforts to prevent HIV infection. She announced that the 2008 State of

World Population Report would have as its theme the role of culture in development. She stated that she was looking forward to participating in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Japan in 2008 and welcomed Japan's focus on health as an integral part of human security.

85. During the discussion, the Executive Board members expressed sincere sympathy for the UNFPA and United Nations staff members who were killed or injured in the terrorist attack in Algiers on 11 December 2007. Condolences were offered to their families, friends and colleagues. Board members also expressed sympathy at the passing away of the Executive Director's mother on 8 January 2008.

86. Delegations underscored the importance of UNFPA work in advancing the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). They commended the Executive Director and the Fund's staff for their tireless efforts in assisting countries to realize the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals. They appreciated UNFPA efforts in addressing fistula, female genital mutilation, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS. They underscored the importance of maternal health and the need to spur progress in achieving Goal 5. They appreciated the critical and leading role UNFPA played in United Nations reform.

87 Delegations expressed satisfaction regarding the record increase in contributions to UNFPA in 2007 and the Fund's expanded donor base of 181 donors, including all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Switzerland announced that it would increase its contribution by 1.5 million Swiss francs for a total of 14 million Swiss francs. Ireland announced that its contribution to UNFPA had increased from 2.54 million euros in 2004 to 4.5 million euros in 2007, and it urged other donors to increase their contributions and consider making multi-year pledges. Netherlands stated that it would remain the UNFPA top donor with an annual contribution of $90 million. The United Kingdom referred to the additional 100 million pounds over five years that it was contributing to the UNFPA Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security.

88. Delegations welcomed and expressed support for the biennial support budget (BSB) being presented for the first time in the results-based format. They commended the Fund's efforts and encouraged UNFPA to continue work on improving the format, stressing the need for further harmonization among the United Nations funds and programmes, including with regard to cost classifications. The close link of the BSB to the strategic plan was also recognized and commended. Delegations advised that indicators should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). They applauded UNFPA for increasing the amount of resources going to programmes. Delegations expressed strong support for the measures to increase staff security. Some delegations noted that they shared the views and observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) regarding the BSB. Like the ACABQ, the delegations were concerned about the post reclassifications being proposed. Some delegations asked about travel costs. Emphasizing the need to develop national capacity, one delegation asked about the reason for converting some of the national operations manager posts into international posts.

89. Delegations emphasized the need to scale up the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Numerous delegations underscored that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment lay at the heart of the global effort to achieve the Goals. Denmark announced establishing a global 'Goal 3 network' to challenge the international community on gender issues, raise awareness and provide inspiration on how to promote women's economic empowerment; objectives would

include obtaining commitments to double development assistance to gender equality and women's empowerment.

90. Japan stated that at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008, it would take up the issue of health in Africa. Furthermore, at the G8 Summit the wider issue of global health would be taken up. Referring to the Fund's reorganization, one delegation stressed the need to take into account the interests of the countries in the region in establishing the regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Delegations noted that General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), adopted in December 2007, established key new policy orientation that would be very significant in guiding the work of the funds and programmes during the next three years. One delegation requested UNFPA to report on progress in implementing the TCPR at the annual session 2008 of the Executive Board.

91. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for the support expressed for UNFPA and its mission to improve sexual and reproductive health and gender equality. She thanked the delegations that had expressed continued financial support, including donors such as Ireland and Switzerland that had announced increases in their core contributions to UNFPA. She appreciated the generosity, support and guidance of the Netherlands, the Fund's top donor. She also thanked the United Kingdom for the generous contribution to improve reproductive health commodity security. She thanked Denmark for its initiative to mobilize support for Goal 3 and to renew global attention to gender equality and women's empowerment through the global Goal 3 network. She stated that UNFPA looked forward to being an active partner in those efforts. While underscoring that improved gender equality and women's empowerment were key to development, she emphasized that investments in women's health, including sexual and reproductive health, benefited families, local communities and countries. She concurred that United Nations system-wide coherence in the area of gender was important and pointed out that UNFPA worked closely with its partners to advance gender equality and achieve better results. She stated that she was looking forward to attending the TICAD meeting in Japan and thanked the Government of Japan for its efforts in bringing partners together towards an accelerated and coordinated response to global health challenges both at the TICAD and G8 meetings.

92. The Executive Director emphasized that the TCPR offered better opportunities to mainstream the ICPD Programme of Action. While the reform process was labour intensive, it was worthwhile from a programmatic and substantive point of view. Regarding the Fund's reorganization, the Executive Director stated that UNFPA was moving forward in becoming a more field-focused organization and was strengthening capacity in its country offices and enhancing transparency and accountability. The reorganization presented an opportunity to deliver programmes more effectively, to make internal processes less cumbersome and more efficient and to provide greater flexibility to the country offices. Responding to a query regarding the operations manager posts, she noted that UNFPA was alone among the United Nations funds and programmes in utilizing national staff as operations managers and considerable efforts had been devoted to training those staff in the latest and best practices. Nevertheless, the Fund faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining those staff due to increased competition from other organizations. She clarified that following a review only those operations manager posts were being proposed for conversion to international posts where the most challenges had been experienced.

93. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for the support to their UNFPA BSB, as well as for the support expressed for upgrading security measures for staff in

the field. Regarding the results-based format of the budget, she agreed that it was a work in progress. Concerning travel costs, she underscored that UNFPA would be vigilant in keeping costs down to a minimum and utilizing different modes of communication. She cautioned that 2008 would however be a heavy year for travel given that reorganization was moving forward. Regarding the 16 posts of Representatives that should be upgraded and 5 posts that should be downgraded, she noted that it was in accordance with the ICSC standards and based on an independent and technical review and evaluation. The information had also been provided to the ACABQ in the UNFPA response. She emphasized that to implement high-calibre programmes it was necessary to have high-calibre staff. She added that most of the reclassifications were for national posts.

94. In conclusion, the Executive Director thanked the Executive Board members for their support and guidance and for encouraging her to re-think and find solutions to the challenges confronting the Fund. She congratulated the Partners in Population and Development for broadening the alliance of its members and for focusing on improving reproductive health services and quality commodities. She expressed deep gratitude to the current Secretary-General of the United Nations and to his predecessor for the unwavering support she received from them. She thanked all UNFPA staff for their "passion and compassion" in moving forward the important work of UNFPA in assisting countries in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

95. The Deputy Executive Director (External relations, United Nations affairs and management) thanked the delegations for their constructive comments and guidance. Concurring that the results-based budgeting format was a work in progress and a learning process for all involved, she emphasized that further refinements would be made utilizing the guidance of the Executive Board and the ACABQ. She stressed that UNFPA was fully committed to working on the format with its partners, including UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNIFEM. She assured the Board that UNFPA remained very vigilant and fiscally conservative. She added that UNFPA was conscious of the need to ensure efficiencies, including as regards travel. She noted that the modest increase in travel costs was due to the strengthened audit function that required travel. She stressed that UNFPA was committed to managing travel in a focused way, including using such alternatives as videoconferencing and other options. Regarding the reclassification of posts, she clarified that all reclassifications had been completed and she recalled that since 1995 the volume of UNFPA operations had grown by 80 per cent whereas the staff had increased by only 10 per cent. She emphasized that UNFPA was committed to learning and training and all staff were offered such opportunities. She highlighted that the majority of UNFPA staff, 75 per cent, were national staff. She concluded by noting that UNFPA was committed to implementing all the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors.

96. The Director, Division for Management Services, appreciated the guidance of the ACABQ and the Executive Board that was fully taken into account in preparing the results-based budget. He noted that although small in size, UNFPA had led the model and it had been a rewarding experience to work with its partners, including UNDP, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and others. He agreed that going forward it would be important for the organizations to harmonize cost classifications, particularly regarding what would be termed programme costs and programme support costs. He concurred that indicators should be robust and 'SMART'. Regarding benefits from enterprise resource planning (ERP), he noted that while these were difficult to quantify they had been substantial. ERP created a comfort level for managers as well as for auditors. The Fund aimed at having the data on

indicators automated. ERP also ensured business continuity and enabled global data to be backed up. He assured the Board that UNFPA would continue to strive for greater efficiencies. Concerning the running costs of the reorganization, he assured that the numbers were the same as had been provided earlier. Regarding travel costs, he confirmed that UNFPA was very vigilant and had taken a decision that all staff would travel on non-refundable tickets bought in advance to achieve cost savings.

97. The Director, Division for Human Resources, elaborated on the various training initiatives undertaken by UNFPA. A major training programme for all UNFPA Representatives had been conducted over the last two years. Similar training had also been provided to the Deputy Representatives and Assistant Representatives. UNFPA had also developed online training courses for its staff, for example, the distance learning course on population, developed in conjunction with the University of Costa Rica, had been taken by the vast majority of UNFPA staff, approximately 700 persons. Also a certification course in finance had been developed with UNDP. Other training programmes were being designed together with other organizations. Additionally, UNFPA had a sabbatical leave programme for staff to undertake a course of study. He underscored that staff training and building staff capacity was very much in line with the Fund's strategic plan and UNFPA was fully committed to it.

XV. Country programmes and related matters

98. In accordance with decision 2006/36, the Executive Board approved the following 14 country programmes on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo; Somalia; Nepal and the Pacific Island countries; and Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

99. Following the country programme approval, the delegations of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nicaragua and Colombia took the floor to thank the Executive Board for approving their programmes. They appreciated the support provided by UNFPA, and underscored that a consultative process involving Government, UNFPA and other development partners had been followed in developing the country programmes. The delegations emphasized that the country programmes conformed with national priorities and were linked to poverty reduction strategies. They thanked the UNFPA Representatives in their respective countries and the UNFPA regional directors for their collaboration and support.

Annex

Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

100. The President of the UNICEF Executive Board invited the Deputy Executive Director to introduce the background paper and discussion on behalf of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP. The Deputy Executive Director highlighted the uneven picture of progress given by recent data and said that a collective sense of urgency was needed if the Millennium Development Goals were to be met.

101. The Coordinator of the Technical Department of the Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade of the Government of Mali and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Malawi shared country perspectives on how progress could be further scaled up and accelerated under national leadership.

102. In the discussion that followed, several delegations noted progress made but expressed concern that several countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, were not on track.

103. Delegations made the following recommendations to accelerate progress: emphasize Government leadership and national ownership as well as increased support from multilateral organizations in scaling up efforts; take more 'bottom-up' approaches so that marginalized groups benefit from scaling-up; ensure the availability of United Nations staff to support country efforts; reach out to the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and encourage South-South cooperation in the sharing and implementation of good practices. More attention should be given to addressing debt relief for poor countries, the fulfilment of aid promises by donor countries, unequal trade relations, gender inequality and the degradation of the environment.

104. A number of delegations recommended a greater focus on least developed countries, especially as demographic changes, economic growth, job creation, security, and a strong international response to conflicts and climate change can impact progress. More than just income factors should be used to classify countries so that efforts can focus on disparity-reduction, especially in middle-income countries. Also recommended was a more comprehensive assessment of progress towards Millennium Development Goal 8, including private funds and new donors.

105. In response, the panellists described country-level efforts to overcome challenges in achieving the Goals, including more comprehensive poverty-reduction programmes, anti-corruption efforts and capacity development. It was suggested that greater attention be paid to the migration of skilled personnel from low-income to industrialized countries; to sustaining gains in food production; and to ensuring quality education. International support needed to be more predictable so that recipient countries could improve their planning. The United Nations should place the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of its work in a coherent way, ensure quality support to countries, and advocate for more resources to be given to Governments that demonstrate commitment to the Goals.

106. The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF recommended a focus on policy change; on data collection, analysis and dissemination, particularly concerning disparities; and on population groups that are excluded and affected by conflict.

Acceleration efforts should focus, even beyond 2015, on challenges associated with sanitation, quality education, and birth registration, among others.

Feedback from the 'delivering as one' pilots

107. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board invited the Administrator, UNDP, to open the discussion on the 'delivering as one' pilots on behalf of the four organizations. The Administrator spoke of the overarching parameters of flexibility and national ownership, noting that each pilot was tailored to the specific country context following the guidance of the triennial comprehensive policy review. The Administrator highlighted that the pilots were demonstrating how the United Nations system as a whole can be more effectively aligned with national priorities, and that joint programming is an essential component, centred on the United Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

108. The following persons then offered their experience with the pilots: the Resident Coordinator in Albania; the Representative of UNICEF in Rwanda; the Deputy Executive Director of WFP and the Assistant Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

109. Representatives of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environmental Programme recognized the pilots as an important platform for improving coherence and effectiveness, and the nationally owned, demand-driven nature of the pilots. They noted that the new UNDAF guidelines are more inclusive and responsive to 'delivering as one', while urging care in combining the meticulously constructed existing agreements into a single plan. They underscored the value of partnerships within the United Nations system, recognizing a need to strengthen the resident coordinator system with the highest quality of leadership and managerial talent and with clearer lines of accountability.

110. Delegations acknowledged the positive experiences of the pilots in creating greater alignment with national priorities and greater coherence within the United Nations system, noting that all United Nations country team members have a part to play in optimizing the resident coordinator system. They emphasized the importance of a flexible, national and context-specific approach in scaling up efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. Delegations also expressed the need to reinvest savings into programmes and to reduce reporting and administrative burdens. Many recognized the stocktaking process as a precursor to a formal evaluation process, while some requested that this be based on criteria established together by all Member States and include issues such as the costs involved in coherence.

111. Many delegations advised against too rapid an adoption of any particular model for 'delivering as one', reiterating that coherence was a means to effectiveness rather than an end in itself, and that alternatives were still being assessed in other international forums. They stressed that coherence must be nationally led, and asserted that resources should not be reallocated based on the early experiences of the pilots, but should continue to be distributed based on multilaterally agreed formulas and principles. Some pointed out security and logistical considerations inherent in the 'one office' model. Many called on senior management at headquarters to support the pilots with clear communication; to harmonize business practices; and to facilitate and accelerate decision-making at country level. Several called on donors to provide adequate, predictable and timely funding.

112. The Executive Director, UNFPA, underscored that the session was focused on hearing from the Member States, including those participating in the pilots.

Highlighting key points from the stocktaking exercise, she noted that the feedback from the pilots showed that the UNDAF formed the foundation of the 'one United Nations' programme and derived from national development priorities. Joint programming and programmes had received positive reviews. She added that the strategic alignment of United Nations support to national development would reduce duplication and transaction costs, and the overall direction of the initiative was positive.

113. The Minister of Integration of Albania noted that the ability to align the work of the United Nations family in Albania to the unique national priority of accession to the European Union had been one of the key achievements to date. She emphasized the importance of government leadership in selecting which organizations, given their comparative advantages, had a key role to play in supporting national goals. She underscored that the overall impression of her Government was very positive concerning 'delivering as one'.

114. The Secretary-General, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda, highlighted the positive experience of his Government with the pilot. He stressed the importance of a close linkage between national planning instruments and the UNDAF to ensure a strong United Nations programme in the country, and noted that the pilot initiative was directly related to the commitments in the Paris Declaration.

115. Delegations from the United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique, Uruguay, and Viet Nam (countries participating in the pilots) underscored that national ownership and leadership were essential for the initiative to work. They emphasized that each country was unique and there was no "one size fits all" approach. They expressed cautious optimism about improved United Nations coherence and increased linkages between national priorities and United Nations programmes. They noted that the 'delivering as one' process was labour intensive and that it was too early to assess development impact.

116. Key issues raised during the subsequent discussion included the need for: patience, as it was too early for an impact evaluation; donors to provide predictable aid; capacity-building of partners to remain a key focus area for the United Nations; and an increased leadership role of the resident coordinators while maintaining neutrality and an inclusive, system-wide focus.

117. Some delegations enquired about the 'one fund' and expressed concern that core funds might be co-mingled. Panellists clarified that the 'coherence funds' in the pilots did not contain core funds, only co-financing resources. It was noted that Governments retained the ability to fund organization-specific activities. Nevertheless, such activities should fall under the joint planning of the full United Nations country team. The importance of focusing on substance and results, rather than merely process, was emphasized.

Disaster risk reduction strategies

118. The President of the Executive Board of WFP introduced the item, providing the audience with the main themes of the session. Disaster risk reduction was an ideal topic for the joint Board because it extended across development and emergencies. The joint Board provided an opportunity to become familiarized with the concept and vocabulary of disaster risk reduction and why it should be integrated into the Funds and Programmes' policies and programmes.

119. The Deputy Executive Director of WFP spoke on behalf of the four organizations. In her remarks, she emphasized adaptation and the need to mitigate the risks of natural disasters and build resilience among those likely to be the hardest hit. Thus, the need to engage in disaster risk reduction was urgent. United Nations organizations could do more to mitigate risks and build resilience by working together under the Hyogo Framework for Action. A stronger link between humanitarian and development efforts was needed to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable communities.

120. The Director of Civil Protection of the Government of Haiti presented a country-level perspective on disaster risk reduction strategies. She described the vulnerability of Haiti to natural hazards and the social and economic situation of the country; she then presented the national disaster risk reduction strategy and the framework of collaboration with donors and the United Nations system for implementing the strategy.

121. The Deputy Director of ISDR described its coordination mechanism to support the Hyogo Framework for Action. She recommended building on existing structures, such as the Hyogo Framework and ISDR, to address disaster risk reduction, and making links with development and climate change. She presented the joint work programme with United Nations organizations and the existing funding mechanisms.

122. The delegations expressed their appreciation of the background paper and renewed their support to the four organizations for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into their policies and programmes. The delegations insisted on the need to link disaster risk reduction with adaptation to climate change; some emphasized that disaster risk reduction could reduce the cost of recovery efforts.

123. The delegations commended the four organizations for their contributions to a more coherent United Nations at the country level, noting that development and emergency response could not be seen as separate issues and stressing that ISDR was the main mechanism for implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. They mentioned the need for the United Nations Development Group to systematically increase its support to Member States for disaster risk reduction.

124. The delegations urged the four organizations to focus on their mandates and work together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and ISDR to determine individual roles. Coherent, linked action was needed, in accordance with individual institutional mandates. The question was raised how to better link emergency and development activities, given the leading role of UNDP in early recovery. The importance of sharing information was stressed. One Member State asked about funding mechanisms for adaptation to climate change.

125. In its response to questions and comments from Member States, the panel noted that the background paper was a general document intended to help the four organizations commence joint work on disaster risk reduction and was not meant to imply that any of them should go beyond their individual mandates. The panel members acknowledged the threefold challenge of making a connection between relief and development; working in partnership; and being guided by country strategies that prioritized disaster risk reduction.